



## EXCURSIONS AND ACTIVITIES POLICY

### PURPOSE

The College's excursion program enables students to further their learning and social skills development in a non-school setting. Incursions organised in addition to the normal College program also provide enriched learning experiences for our students, beyond what is available in the everyday curriculum. It is imperative that excursions and activities are planned and staffed appropriately for the benefit and safety of all students and staff in attendance.

### DEFINITIONS

#### Excursions

Any activity undertaken by students off the College grounds. This includes but is not limited to:

- Part day trips
- Whole day trips
- Overnight trips
- Interschool Sport
- Camps
- Subject-based field trips
- Unsupervised excursions for senior students

#### Activities

Any activity undertaken by students supplementary to their normal school day, whether undertaken on or off College grounds. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Activities mentioned above under Excursions
- Incursions

### OBJECTIVES

- To ensure that excursions and activities are planned and approved appropriately
  - To ensure that excursions and activities are appropriately staffed in alignment with Duty of Care and Child Safe requirements
  - To ensure that excursions and activities (including adventure activities) are conducted safely
  - To ensure that, in planning events and activities, the Child Safe standards and other relevant College policies pertaining to student safety and wellbeing are adhered to
  - To ensure that informed consent is obtained from parents or carers for their child to participate in an excursion or activity
  - To ensure that students are adequately prepared for excursions or activities
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**Important:** Principals, teachers, school councillors and others involved in school excursions, must anticipate the possibility of litigation following an incident or injury. They must be prepared for a detailed examination of their planning, actions and the curriculum role of any activity.

## IMPLEMENTATION

### Planning & Approval

While the degree of planning involved will depend on the risks involved, the conduct of any excursion or activity should take into account the following:

- Educational purpose of the excursion and its contribution to the curriculum
- Department approval requirements for excursions and staff travel
- Maintenance of full records, including documentation of the planning process
- Suitability of the environment and/or venue for the excursion
- Informed consent from parents or carers
- Adequate student and staff medical information
- Student preparation and behaviour
- Requirements for any adventure activities (these involve greater than normal risk - there are additional considerations associated with these activities)

Please refer to Appendices A and B for the appropriate processes for the planning and approval of events and activities, whether on College grounds, or external.

### Parent or Carer Consent

The College must obtain **written** or **electronic** consent from parents or carers for excursions, for the College to:

- take the student out of the school environment for a day excursion
- have the student in its care after normal school hours on an overnight excursion
- obtain parent or carer authorisation:
  - for the financial costs of the excursion
  - for any adventure activities that may be undertaken during the excursion
  - for students to be sent home from an excursion in the event of serious misbehaviour and for the costs of the student's return to be the parent or carer's responsibility
  - that if needed the school can consent to emergency medical treatment
- enable the parent or carer to alert the school to any medical conditions or allergies.

### Requirements for Informed Consent

The College must:

- obtain **written** or **electronic** signatures
- give parents or carers, who are to provide consent, sufficient information about the excursion to enable them to make an informed decision
- tell the parent or carer the:
  - nature of the proposed activity
  - degree of supervision
  - risks involved
- keep records of the consent documentation at the school

- ensure that the teacher in charge of the excursion has a hard or electronic copy of the consent documentation for each student on the excursion, for excursions requiring school council approval
- for school council approved excursions:
  - ensure parents are aware that the principal may need to cancel or alter excursions arrangements at short notice, which may lead to inconvenience or financial losses to parents. This would be required to ensure the safety of students and/or due to circumstances beyond the control of the school.

The timelines for sufficient notification to parents are outlined in Appendix B. **The cut-off time for permission and payment (where payment is required) of general excursions is THREE DAYS PRIOR TO THE EVENT without exception.**

**Where consent and payment (where payment is required) is not received by the cut off date, the student will not be able to attend the event.**

**Under no circumstances will verbal permission be accepted for a student to attend a College event or activity where written consent is required.**

### **Student Medical Information**

While we retain student medical information at the College, it is required that a confidential medical information form be completed by parents or carers before each school-council approved excursion (e.g. adventure activities or camps). In addition to providing staff with the information they require to ensure student safety, this provides parents and carers with the opportunity to vary any information previously provided to the College.

The College will:

- ensure that the teacher-in-charge takes the medical information forms on the excursion
- ensure these forms are available to other excursion staff in emergency situations
- keep copies of the forms at the school.
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**Note:** Students should not be denied attendance at any excursion because a parent/guardian refuses permission for a blood transfusion.

**Information:** Transfusions or other courses of medical treatment are matters for legally qualified medical practitioners. Teachers cannot be held liable for medical treatment given against the wishes of a parent or carer.

### **Payment**

All efforts will be made not to exclude students simply for financial reasons. Parents experiencing financial difficulty, who wish for their children to attend an excursion, are invited to discuss alternative arrangements with the Principal or Business Manager. Decisions relating to alternative payment arrangements will be made by the Principal or Business Manager in consultation with the appropriate staff, on an individual basis.

All families will be given sufficient time to make payments for excursions. Parents will be provided with permission requirements and excursion information via COMPASS (and other communication means), clearly stating payment finalisation dates. Payment and consent may be made electronically via COMPASS; alternatively, the submission of a signed

permission form and payment (cash / credit card) may be made via the College front office, or Primary Reception. Students whose payments have not been finalised within by published timeline will not be allowed to attend unless alternative payment arrangements have been previously organised with the Principal or Business Manager or other nominated representative.

Office staff will be responsible for managing and monitoring the payments made by parents and will provide organizing teachers with detailed records on a regular basis.

The Department of Education and Training (DET) will not be involved in any expense associated with the conduct of excursions. The school may choose to subsidize some excursions or some student's expenses.

## **Risk Management**

An assessment of excursion risks must be undertaken as part of the planning process. This includes carefully considered venue selection (Refer to Appendix C) in addition to an assessment of the risks of the event. International trips must be logged on the Smart Traveller website as part of the risk management process.

The Student Activity Locator will be completed by the Events Coordinator once the event has been approved.

For excursions requiring school council approval, an excursion risk assessment plan must be provided which includes consideration of risks across the entire excursion (including transportation, activities undertaken, excursion venues and staff or student illness) and any significant financial risks to the school and/or parents (for example if an excursion needs to be cancelled).

Venue managers and activity providers should be consulted in the preparation of the school's risk management plan and where appropriate, the risk management plans of venues or activity providers should be used to inform the school risk assessment process. Risk assessment templates for a number of activities can be found on Compass in the Camps, Events and Excursions section of the Policies folder.

In the event of an emergency during an on-campus event, the College Emergency Management Procedures will be followed.

In the event of an emergency during an off-campus event, staff will:

- Take emergency action as documented in the excursion and camp's emergency and risk management plan.
- Immediately notify the College principal.
- The principal will make arrangements for the Department's Security Services Unit to be telephoned on 9589 6266

## **Fire Danger and Extreme Weather Notifications**

Prior to the excursion (including prior to departure on the day), the Principal and excursion leader must take into account all DET notifications and updates (or independently sourced information) surrounding all weather conditions pertinent to the area travelling to and from. (For example, information relating to fires, storms, winds or any extreme weather).

Fire Danger- The Principal may need to cancel excursions and camps at short notice on days of extreme fire danger or total fire ban. On such days, the Security Services Unit liaises with fire authorities to obtain up to date information for communication to schools that may be affected by wildfire, including schools with students attending camps in areas affected by wildfire. If an excursion is not cancelled, special fire safety precautions will be required. When required, the College will follow the Department's emergency management (bushfires) procedures for off-site activities.

- Teachers must carry mobile phones and will be equipped with first aid kits to be used in emergency situations.

## **Child Safe Standards**

To fulfil the requirements of the Child Safety Standards, the College will ensure the following occurs in relation to excursions, activities and camps:

1. In accordance with any applicable legal requirement or school policy, the school must make reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the following information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child connected work:
  - a) Working with Children Check status, or similar check;
  - b) Proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications;
  - c) The person's history of work involving children; and
  - d) References that address the person's suitability for the job and working with children.
2. The College need not comply with the requirements in step (1) above if it has already made reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the information set out in steps **(1)(a)** to **(1)(d)**, above about a particular individual within the previous 12 months.
3. The College will ensure that appropriate supervision or support arrangements are in place in relation to:
  - a) The induction of new school staff into the school's policies, codes, practices, and procedures governing child safety and child connected work; and
  - b) Monitoring and assessing a job occupant's continuing suitability for child connected work.
4. The school will implement practices that enable the school governing authority to be satisfied that people engaged in child-connected work perform appropriately in relation to child safety

## **Teacher Responsibilities**

### **Duty of Care**

All school staff attending a camp or excursion owe a duty of care to the students. This means that they must ensure that reasonable steps are taken to prevent any reasonably foreseeable harm to students. This duty is nondelegable, which means that it cannot be delegated to external camp or education providers, parents or volunteers. The designated teacher in charge has ultimate responsibility for all students in their care.

External education providers and para-professionals must have appropriate certification (e.g. Working with Children's Registration) and ensure that supervision guidelines are followed.

Prior to the camp or excursion parent/carers should be made aware that DET does not provide student accident cover and that they need to make their own arrangements for cover.

### **Teacher In-Charge Responsibilities**

A designated "Teacher in Charge" will co-ordinate each excursion. The Teacher in Charge must complete all relevant aspects of the event documentation. The Teacher in Charge must work with the supervising teacher to complete the relevant risk assessment and submit to the relevant person at the time of making the application.

During the excursion / camp; the teacher-in-charge will:

- Know the exact location of students at all times including during travel.
- Maintain a record of telephone contacts for the supervising staff accompanying the excursion.
- Know who the school contact person is and their phone number.
- Have a copy of the names of family contacts for all students and staff on the excursion.
- Have copies of the parental approval and medical advice forms for those students on the excursion.
- Maintain a copy of the completed approval form (including all attachments) submitted to the school council.
- The teacher in charge must carry a mobile phone and first aid kit for each excursion. The teacher in charge is responsible for collecting the first aid kit prior to leaving.
- The teacher in charge will communicate the anticipated return time with the College office in the event that excursions are returning out of school hours. Parents will be informed prior to students leaving for the excursion, that they can phone the office to receive an updated anticipated return time.

Teachers participating in an excursion and/or camps will:

- Understand the purpose of the program and its connection to student learning.
- Be aware of their supervisory responsibilities throughout the program.
- Know who the nominated member of staff is who will provide first aid if required.
- Know the exact location of students they are responsible for at all times including during travel.

### **General Responsibilities**

- In the case where an excursion involves a particular class or year level group, the organizing teacher will ensure that there is an alternative program available for those students not attending the excursion.
- For students in Years 11 and 12 it is expected that the teacher in charge will consult with other staff before planning to minimise the impact on other classes.
- Parents may be invited to assist in the delivery of excursions, as deemed necessary.
- Only students that have displayed sensible, reliable behaviour at school will be permitted to participate in school excursions. Parents will be notified if their child is in danger of losing the privilege to participate in an excursion due to poor behaviour at school. The decision to exclude a student will be made by the Principal, Assistant Principal, Student Wellbeing Coordinator or Sub School Leader, in consultation with

the organizing teacher. Both the parent and the student will be informed of this decision prior to the excursion.

- Disciplinary measures apply to students on camps and excursions consistent with the College's policies. In extreme cases the camp or excursion staff, following consultation with, and the approval of, the principal or their nominee, may determine that a student should return home during a camp or excursion. In such circumstances, the parent/carer will be advised;
  - Of the circumstance associated with the decision to send the student home
  - Of the time when the parents/carers may collect their child from the camp or excursion of the anticipated time that the student will arrive home
  - Of any costs associated with the student's return which will be the responsibility of the parents/carers
- All excursion staff and, where appropriate, the students will be familiar with the specific procedures for dealing with emergencies on each excursion. Visit the DET Safety, Emergency and Risk Management site at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spaq/safety/Pages/excursionsafety.aspx> for information to assist schools to plan for and manage emergencies and security related incidents.

## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

[DET EXCURSIONS AND EVENTS POLICY](#)

## **APPENDICES**

**Appendix A:** Planning and Approvals Process

**Appendix B:** Event Planning Matrix

**Appendix C:** Venue Selection and Assessment

**Appendix D:** Excursion and Activity Protocol

## **EVALUATION**

This policy was last updated in Term 2 2018 and is scheduled for review in Term 2 2022